

Cameron County court-at-law  
(SB 1575 by Uribe/Warner)

**DIGEST:** SB 1575 would have granted the two county courts-at-law in Cameron County concurrent jurisdiction in certain felony matters with the consent of district courts in which a particular case is pending. The county courts would have received jurisdiction to conduct arraignments, pre-trial hearings and guilty pleas. The bill also would have added concurrent jurisdiction in family law cases and matters and appeals from the Industrial Accident Board. The ceiling on civil jurisdiction would have been increased from \$20,000 to \$50,000.

**GOVERNOR'S  
REASON  
FOR VETO:**

General felony jurisdiction has been vested by the Legislature in the district courts of this state and not in statutory county courts or constitutional county courts. This derives from the philosophy that individuals whose punishment can include incarceration within the state correctional system should be subject to state courts. As district courts are state-funded and vacancies are subject to the appointive powers of state officials, including the Texas Senate, all felony prosecutions, including preliminary matters, should continue to fall solely and exclusively within the purview of these courts.

**RESPONSE:** "I understand and accede to the governor's concern over having county court-at-law judges involved routinely in felony matters," said Rep. Larry Warner, the House sponsor of SB 1575. "Having county courts-at-law aid district courts in other routine matters, such as uncontested divorces, seems to be a good idea, especially in light of the fact that the entire expense of the county court-at-law is borne by the county. Consequently after consulting with the presiding judge in Cameron County, I have determined to reintroduce the bill, leaving out the section the governor found objectionable."

**NOTES:** SB 1575 was considered on the Consent Calendar and was not analyzed in a Daily Floor Report.